



ULSTER COUNTY

LEGISLATIVE NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ulster County To Excuse First Responders During Volunteer Emergency Response

(Kingston, NY) Since the establishment of a Woodstock ambulance service, Ametek Rotron has housed an ambulance on-site during business hours and provides time off to employees answering the community's call for first responders. The all-volunteer ambulance squad, employed by Ametek Rotron, rotate shifts to respond to emergencies.

It was this civic-oriented business commitment that sparked Legislative Chairman John Parete and his son, Legislator Rich Parete to sponsor legislation that provided the same opportunity for Ulster County personnel classified as Department Heads, Managerial Staff, Legislative Employees, and Board of Election employees.

"These volunteers are not just the backbone of the emergency response community, they are the spine for the frame of first responders," stated Legislative Chairman John Parete. "Ulster County's rural quality of life is predicated on the services and response they provide."

While the Firemen's Association of the State of New York reports decline in volunteer emergency medical technicians, available volunteers are having to travel farther and farther from home to work.

"This policy is about ensuring the availability of trained, volunteer first responders in our rural community," commented Legislative Chairman John Parete. Our first responders share the experiences of arriving just in time as well as not having enough time or manpower. When trained volunteers are just around the corner, this policy will allow them to get there in time."

In 2014, the New York State Legislature and Governor recognized the need to increase the ranks of first responders during locally and State declared state of emergencies and passed legislation to require the granting of leave to volunteer emergency responders.

"Few people are fortunate enough to work in the towns in which they live," stated District 15 Legislator and Ellenville First Aid & Rescue Squad President TJ Briggs. "Local companies that allow their people to leave to respond to emergencies could mean a life saved." Legislator Briggs has a lifetime of experience with such mutual agreements having retired after 32 years with the New York State Department of Corrections where union contracts have, for years, enabled staff to respond to local emergencies.

"We initiated this policy with the County personnel units we had authority over," noted Legislation co-sponsor Rich Parete. "Let's hope this doesn't stop here but expands to include all County collective bargaining units."

Resolution #231 passed the Ulster County Legislature on June 16, 2015 and now awaits signature by County Executive Michael Hein.

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[Resolution #231 attached]